

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 092548

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SENV, CA, US

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON BEAUFORT SEA DRILLING

FOLLOWING CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
USE ON IF ASKED BASIS AT NOON PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 16.

MEMBERS OF CANADIAN PRESS CORPS HAVE ALREADY QUERRIED
EUR/CAN ON U.S. REACTION. WE HAVE RESPONDED ALONG SAME
LINES .BEGIN TEXT--

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE USG REACTION TO THE CANADIAN DECI-
SION TO COMMENCE EXPLORATORY DRILLING IN THE BEAUFORT SEA
THIS SUMMER?.

ANSWER: WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WITH THESE DRILLING
PLANS IN WATERS OFF OF CANADA WAS A DECISION FOR THE
CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TO TAKE. THE U.S., OF COURSE, HAS
BEEN DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE POTENTIAL TRANS-BOUNDARY
IMPLICATIONS OF THESE PLANS, PARTICULARLY IN THE EVENT
OF AN OIL WELL BLOWOUT. WE HAVE HELD A NUMBER OF TECHNI-
CAL AND OFFICIAL-LEVEL MEETINGS WITH THE GOC SINCE LATE
JANUARY WHEN WE WERE ADVISED OF THE DRILLING PROPOSAL.

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PAGE 02 STATE 092548

WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE FULLY TO ASSESS THE SITUATION AS

NOT ALL OF THE DATA FROM CANADIAN STUDIES IS YET AVAILABLE, BUT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MOST COOPERATIVE DURING THIS PERIOD IN EXCHANGING INFORMATION AND GIVING US A CHANCE TO EXPRESS OUR VIEWS. WE HAVE VOICED A NUMBER OF CONCERNS AND WERE ASSURED THEY WOULD BE FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE RESERVED ALL U.S. LEGAL RIGHTS AND MADE CLEAR WE WOULD EXPECT CANADA TO FULFILL ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS. WE HAVE SET IN MOTION WITH THE CANADIANS CONTINUING CLOSE BILATERAL CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS IN THE BEAUFORT SEA, ON QUESTIONS OF LIABILITY, AND ON CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR SPILL AND BLOWOUT CONTROL. THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HAS INVITED US TO OBSERVE THE DRILLING OPERATIONS AND WE HAVE THAT INVITATION UNDER CONSIDERATION.--END TEXT. ROBINSON

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